CLIMATE CHANGE

Lobbying Groups' Climate Statements Versus Their Statements on Democrats' Climate Bill

Major trade groups support climate regulations. Just not *those* ones.

By Dharna Noor Yesterday 3:50PM | Comments (2) | Alerts

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Senate Democrats are working on a $3.5 trillion spending plan full of investments to shore up infrastructure, physical and otherwise, to withstand the climate crisis and lower emissions.

Unlike the bare-bones infrastructure bill Congress passed this summer, this bill doesn't need bipartisan support to pass. Among the climate-focused provisions in the bill is a Clean Electricity Performance Program that would pay utility providers to kick fossil fuels to the curb in favor of wind, solar, hydro, and nuclear power. The bill also includes measures to create a Civilian Climate Corps, tax credits and grants for renewable power, and new fees imposed on corporations for emitting carbon dioxide and methane.

Of course, trade groups and big polluting corporations aren't too happy about all this. But wait—haven't they all been saying they want to fight climate change? What happened to all that?

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The American Petroleum Institute

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What API says about climate change: The American Petroleum Institute, the largest lobbying group for the oil and gas industry, said in March that it supports a carbon tax. On its website, the group says that "API and its members commit to delivering solutions that reduce the risks of climate change while meeting society's growing energy needs. We support global action that drives greenhouse gas emissions reductions and economic development."

API's response to the budget bill: API has waged a massive campaign against the bill, spending seven figures to run broadcast and digital ads in specific Congressional districts and states in the hopes of souring public opinion. When it comes to the budget bill's tax on methane—a greenhouse gas that is 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide in the short term and has scientists very freaked out—API is especially not down. Its ads focused on the methane fee say it would harm workers and ruin the fossil fuel industry—something some oil and gas companies represented by API supposedly *want* to see regulated.

"This is a misguided and punitive tax on natural gas. And it's not only duplicative on top of federal regulation, but we think it will also harm our economic recovery by increasing energy costs on Americans," the group's president and CEO said in a statement.

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The U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Image: Wikimedia Commons

What the Chamber of Commerce says about climate change: "We believe that durable climate policy must be made by Congress," the Chamber of Commerce says on its website. Sounds great!

The Chamber's response to the budget bill: The group, whose board includes representatives from polluting companies like Dow and Exxon, is "starting to put together an economy-wide coalition to coordinate the fight against the still forming economic package," according to the Washington Post.

Neil Bradley, the Chamber's executive vice president, said in a statement that the bill "proposes to fundamentally rewrite the rules of the road across virtually every major industrial sector." And Chamber of Commerce president and CEO Suzanne Clark said that the "Chamber will do everything we can to prevent this tax raising, job killing reconciliation bill from becoming law."

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America's Power

Image: Facebook

What America's Power says about climate change: America's Power is a trade group for the coal-fired power industry that was formerly known as the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity. Last year, its CEO Michelle Bloodworth said that "climate change is a very important issue for all of us because of its environmental and economic consequences." That marked a major shift. The group used to openly promote straight-up climate misinformation. Cool, right?!

America's Power's response to the budget bill: If the bill's Clean Electricity Performance Program passes, coal-fired power will be hit harder than other fossil fuels given it has higher emissions. Despite Bloodworth's claim about the importance of climate change, the group vehemently opposed the bill. And she made sure to let the ranking members on the House Energy and Commerce Committee who are instrumental in shaping the bill know where the group stands.

"Although the electricity grid is undergoing a transition, the coal fleet will be needed for the foreseeable future because it promotes grid reliability and resilience, generates affordable electricity, provides fuel security, and is an indispensable alternative when other electricity sources are not available or are too expensive," Bloodworth wrote in a letter to lawmakers.

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American Electric Power

Image: Wikimedia Commons

What AEP says about climate change: "For more than two decades, climate change has been a key issue for us and our stakeholders," AEP, one of the nation's largest utilities, says on its website.

AEP's response to the budget bill: The group wrote a letter to lawmakers and other utility companies saying the Clean Electricity Performance Program would "adversely impact the reliability and resilience of the electric grid," E&E News reported.

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The National Association of Manufacturers

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What the NAM says about climate change: "Manufacturers are leaders in everything from combatting climate change to enhancing diversity and inclusion in the workforce," the group, which lobbies for the manufacturing industry, said in a press release in July about its environmental, social, and governance metrics stance.

That's not all they've said, though. In a report released in January, right as President Joe Biden was settling into the White House, the group noted that "Manufacturers are committed to acting responsibly in helping to maintain a clean and prosperous environment. We owe this to the people and communities we serve, to our customers across the globe and to the millions of men and women who make things in America."

Amen.

NAM's response to the budget bill: The trade group commissioned a whole study to push the idea that the bill's taxes on corporations will tank economic growth and cost America jobs. Because yeah, I'm sure it's workers who NAM is concerned about.

"There's no getting past the fact that this tax plan adds up to fewer jobs for American workers," Aric Newhouse, the group's senior vice president of policy and government relations, said in a statement. "We know from experience that competitive tax rates spur job creation, higher wages and investment in communities." Uh huh.

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